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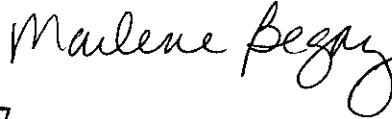
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Marlene Begay

OCT 19 2001

Statement of:

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I am writing to express my deep concern over the wayward Yucca Mountain Project and the flawed process railroading it toward unacceptable approval.

How can the Secretary of Energy be preparing to recommend Yucca Mountain for a high-level nuclear waste dump when thousands of public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement still have not been addressed? Without a Final Environmental Impact Statement, a detailed transportation plan, finalized Department of Energy repository siting guidelines, or a Nuclear Regulatory Commission repository licensing rule, the DOE lacks any basis whatsoever for consideration of site suitability. The public cannot accept a recommendation to move ahead with the Yucca Mountain Project that arises from such a fatally flawed process.

I am a member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe of Nevada. Our reservation is located approximately 300 miles north of Yucca Mountain. Yucca Mountain is on disputed territory claimed by Western Shoshone Indian Nation under the Ruby Valley Treaty of 1863. According to the Shoshone, Yucca Mountain is not really a mountain. It is a rolling hill. This means that it moves and will continue to move. Putting nuclear waste in the land is polluting it and will kill Mother Earth. We only have one earth, and one water. Everything is related: If we poison the earth, then we are poisoning ourselves.

Why is Yucca Mountain being pushed through so fast? Why not spend the money to come up with alternative ways to dispose of the nuclear waste? Would not this be the safer and better option especially with the events of September 11th? There is a saying that goes "Only when the last river is polluted, then will you learn that money cannot be eaten". We must protect all the rivers of the earth including the underground ones. We must look not only at the next 100 years, but also for the next 1000 years and beyond.

In short, Yucca Mountain is a very bad site. Yucca Mountain is in a very active earthquake zone, with a number of volcanic cinder cones visible a short distance away. The highly fractured and fissured rock allows

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rainwater infiltration at a fast rate, which will corrode waste containers and wash their deadly contents into the groundwater, contaminating the drinking water supply for nearby communities. As pointed out to DOE three years ago by over 200 environmental groups, this fast flow of water should disqualify Yucca Mountain from further consideration, for it violates DOE's own repository siting guidelines.

Given that 75% of the commercial reactors are east of the Mississippi River, moving the waste many thousands of miles across the country to Nevada would require many tens of thousands of shipments, past the homes, schools and workplaces of 50 million Americans, through 43 states. A severe transport accident on our roads and railroads, could release radiation and cost tens or hundreds of billions of dollars to clean up, not to mention the untold health impacts. In addition, DOE has not addressed terrorist and sabotage threats against high-level waste shipments. Any day you can look up rail shipments on the Internet, see where the rail cars are and what they are carrying. Are we really prepared for this?

Why should Nevada be the new target for terrorism? What consequences of terrorism have been looked at and how could the U.S. deal with such magnitudes?

I am very opposed to the Yucca Mountain project. Whoever's nuclear waste it is, let them take responsibility for it. We must pay the cost now to look at alternatives. Rushing ahead will cost us the future.

STOP THE YUCCA MOUNTAIN PROJECT!